

March 20, 1996
For Immediate Release
Internet: <http://www.treasurer.ca.gov>

Contact: Stan Devereux
Patrick Hill
(916) 653-0665

Treasurer Fong Wins Conservative Support on Immigration **"Separate Issues of *Legal* vs. *Illegal* Immigration"**

WASHINGTON, DC--California State Treasurer Matt Fong said today that he is encouraged by the increased conservative sensitivity towards separating the legislative debate between legal and illegal immigration.

Treasurer Fong outlined his concerns during House Speaker Newt Gingrich's National Strategies Group meeting today of 12 prominent Americans from across the nation, which included Grover Norquist of Americans for Tax Reform, and Ralph Reed of the Christian Coalition. The group discussed federal legislation working its way through Congress which deals with curbing *illegal* immigration. Fong told Gingrich that language contained in HR 2202 would severely restrict *legal* immigration, preventing families from reuniting in this country.

Following the discussion, the Christian Coalition sent letters to members of Congress in support of removing legal immigration from the debate on illegal immigration.

"Separate the two issues," urged Fong, a fourth-generation American of Asian heritage. "While we recognize the concerns about legal immigration, the frustrations stemming from illegal immigration confuse the issue and should be addressed separately," said Fong.

"I am encouraged by the comments and concerns expressed by Speaker Gingrich, and other conservative leaders, such as Jack Kemp, Bill Bennett, Congressman Dick Armey and the Christian Coalition. Pundits would have you believe that all conservatives blame immigrants for the country's problems. Let's support families by separating the issues of legal and illegal immigration," said Fong.

In its letter to Congress, the Christian Coalition said "the family is now and has always been the basic unit in American culture. Much of the recent decline of the American family can be attributed to actions of the federal government.

HR2202, if passed in its present form, would contribute further to that decline."

--more--

2-2-2

“At a time when the family needs all the help it can get, the federal government should not be acting, as it does in this legislation, to keep families apart. This legislation would tell American citizens that their parents and their children...are no longer part of the family, no longer welcome in the United States of America.”

“Splitting the bill protects the reunification of families. There are people in the system that have been waiting years for the opportunity to enter the United States legally,” Fong said, likening it to waiting in a grocery line, “only to have the grocery clerk turn you away just as it’s your turn. Those people should not be penalized because *illegal* immigration is a problem.”

###